

**Mansfield YSB Advisory Board
Minutes**

Tuesday, June 9, 2009
12:00 noon @ Mansfield Town Hall
Conf. Rm. B

PRESENT: E. Mantzaris (Chair), F. Perrotti, J. Marchon, J. O'Keefe, A. Hoyt, K. Grunwald (staff), K. McNamara (staff), P. Michalak (staff), K. Taylor (Staff), Matt Hart (guest)

I. Call to Order: Chair E. Mantzaris called the meeting to order at 12:05 PM.

Matt Hart, Town Manager was welcomed and introduced to the Board. Members of the Advisory Board then provided an overview of their perspectives on Youth Services:

A. Why Are We Here - Advisory Board Members:

- E. Mantzaris shared that the Youth Service Bureau is here to provide a voice for the youth in Mansfield. Other Board members each then shared their personal reasons for being members.
- J. O'Keefe stated that it is also his desire to make the Board aware of the youth the he comes in contact with who could benefit from participation in YSB programs.

Submitted by: Officer Jerry Marchon, Mansfield Police Department

Why are we here?

There are many, varied reasons why each individual member is here, but the reason that we are needed here is one. The children can not speak for themselves. Even if they were capable of articulating their needs adults that control the purse strings would not take them seriously. Though it seems that the Board is often not taken seriously either or if it is, then its recommendations are dismissed as quickly as if they were made by the children the Board serves.

As adults, we understand the need for budgetary restraints and fiscal responsibility while we try to manage our household budgets in these economically tougher times, but we also know the importance of prioritizing. The health and welfare of the children comes first. Parents

often sacrifice their own needs and wants for the needs of their children. This has been the norm for centuries, and not just in difficult economic times.

This Board is charged with the task of making known the needs of the children of Mansfield and prioritizing those needs. I believe that it does not make frivolous requests nor does it make requests based on speculation or conjecture. I understand that the taxpayer can not fund everybody's wants and needs. If that were possible, we would be in utopia. All I ask is that the needs of the children be prioritized within the scope of the entire town budget.

Jerry Marchon

B. What Makes Us Different - Pat Michalak:

- Work collaboratively with all of the public schools in Mansfield.
- We maximize our resources by utilizing community agencies and area universities for professional services and volunteers.
- Services are offered without barriers. This includes hours, locations and fees.

- Work with clients through life stages from pre-school through transition to high school.
- Provide psychiatric assessments and treatment with a board-certified psychiatrist.
- We work independently and are able to respond to the changing needs of our community, thus strengthening connections between the Town and our residents.

C. Where Are We Going -Kevin Grunwald:

- K. Grunwald reviewed the Action Plan that was developed by the Advisory Board as a follow-up to the plan that was started as a part of Mansfield 2020. He reported that YSB is assessing what the future priorities of the programs are, and what resources will be necessary to meet those needs.

D. Discussion:

- P. Michalak spoke of the obstacles that exist when referring clients to outside sources; e.g. documents, paperwork, confidentiality and the comfort level of clients. She spoke of the needs of youth at the Mansfield Middle School who are transitioning to E.O. Smith High School. A discussion followed regarding youth who are experiencing domestic violence or who have incarcerated parents. Pat shared that YSB's position is proactive in this area and feels that more can be done to support these youth and families.
- P. Michalak asked Matt Hart what direction the Youth Service Bureau should take to increase visibility and awareness to the community and the Town Council. He provided a brief history of how the individual departments at one time met with the Town Council but due to time constraints that is no longer done. He advised that YSB should get on the Council's agenda to better inform them.
- Matt Hart raised the question about integration with YSB, School Readiness and iParentNetwork. K. Grunwald reported that integration had increased and collaboration has been beneficial. Matt also presented a question about YSB's involvement with substance abuse issues and the Community Campus Partnership. P. Michalak informed him that there are referrals for substance abuse, however, the problem is more prevalent with adult YSB clients.
- Matt Hart asked about the possibility of Parent Education for inmates to learn the necessary skills for being a successful parent. He also inquired about the involvement of immigrant families with the Youth Service Department.
- Matt Hart brought up the topic of regionalism and asked if we partner with any other YSB's. P. Michalak informed him that this is done through the PAWS a leadership conference held once a year and participation with Connecticut Youth Services Association.
- F. Perrotti asked about the possibility of speaking directly to the Town Council, and was told that the Town Council is developing a venue for committees and boards to apprise the Council of their goals, priorities, etc. Matt Hart also recommended scheduling a presentation to the Town Council.

II. Approval of minutes: The minutes of the **6/9/09** meeting were approved as written.

III. Reports

Director's Report – K. Grunwald reported that the Department is looking at the data that we collect to identify goals and priorities in using a Results Based Accountability model. He also advised the Board that the Community Planning Group is completing their plan for young children, and that when this is completed in the summer board members will be invited to a community presentation.

Coordinator's Report – P. Michalak gave a brief summary of the May activities and thanked the Board members for their past and present commitment to the Board and the youth and families of Mansfield. Monthly activities report is attached

May Activities 2009

Social Work Interns: Jennifer Morrison and Lauren DiGrazia will be doing their second year graduate internship placements at YSB. We will be meeting this month to get acquainted and to assist us in planning for their work to begin in the fall. Jennifer is doing her internship in casework and Lauren concentration is administration.

Give and Go event: Grandparents and other families benefited from the items collected during "move out". Items included refrigerators, microwaves, and storage containers, vacuum cleaners, cleaning supplies, laundry detergent and personal care items. The program was a huge success and we would like to thank Frank Perrotti for his help in distributing the items.

JUMP: The students who are participating in JUMP, one of two leadership programs sponsored by YSB, have attended weekly sessions which are being facilitated by Ken Caputo and Carol Sweet, a teacher from the middle school. JUMP is focusing on tapping into each student potential. This program is well supported by the school administration and works toward creating good citizens.

LEAP: The students met this month with Karen Depres, MMS school guidance counselor, Ken Caputo of Villari's and YSB staff as an ongoing leadership program. During this meeting the students became

more acquainted with each other and are working on skills that will help them become better students and tomorrow's leaders.

Dr. Haney: The multi family group met with Dr Haney this month on 2 occasions. We have found that the group is forming a therapeutic bond which helps the children and parents support each other.

Grief Matters: YSB hosted a reunion dinner. Families from all of the grief sessions were invited. Ten families attended as well as eleven community volunteers. The group would like to continue to meet on a monthly basis. We are working on a plan to offer continued support to these families.

Thank you: I would like to take a moment to thank the board for its work this year. We appreciate your time, effort and support. Your input is valuable to us.

IV. Old Business:

No discussion

V. New Business:

Discussion with Town Manager, Matt Hart

VI. Other:

Chair E. Mantzaris presented Amber Hoyt, student member, with a certificate for her dedicated service and commitment to the Youth Service Bureau.

Adjournment: the meeting adjourned at 1:03 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen L. Taylor